

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CONVERSATION BETWEEN SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL EMISSARY
RICHARD MOOSE AND DEPUTY MINISTER POLITICAL AFFAIRS ABDAL
RAHMAN MANSOURI, MARCH 23, 1978

1. MANSOURI REQUESTED THAT THE US SIDE PROVIDE HIM
WITH NOTES OF THE SUBJECT CONVERSATION. BELOW IS A
SUMMATION OF THE POINTS MADE BY MR. MOOSE WHICH THE
EMBASSY MAY PASS IN AN APPROPRIATE FORM TO THE DEPUTY
MINISTER:

2. MR. MOOSE INFORMED THE DEPUTY MINISTER THAT THE
PRESIDENT HAD ASKED HIM TO COME TO SAUDI ARABIA TO
REPORT ON HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT SIAD AND TO
SEEK THE SAUDI VIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE
HORN. PRESIDENT CARTER HAD SENT MR. MOOSE TO MOGADIS-
CIO TO HELP CONSOLIDATE A PRO-WESTERN POSITION ON THE
PART OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOMALI DEMOCRATIC
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REPUBLIC, AND TO EXPRESS US INTEREST IN WORKING WITH
SOMALIA TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION.
THE UNITED STATES ALSO DESIRED TO WORK WITH FRIENDS IN

THE AREA TO LIMIT THE SOVIET AND CUBAN INTERVEN-
TION IN THE REGION, A QUESTION WHICH WAS OF MAJOR
CONCERN TO PRESIDENT CARTER.

3. MR. MOOSE SPENT NEARLY TWELVE HOURS WITH PRESIDENT
SIAD AND FOUND HIM TO BE A SHREWD AND INTELLIGENT MAN

WITH HIS ATTENTION FOCUSED ON SOMALI INTERESTS. THE TALKS COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF BILATERAL ISSUES. PRESIDENT SIAD WAS INFORMED OF THE US' PARTICULAR DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOMALIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TO HELP WITH HUMANITARIAN RELIEF. WHILE IN MOGADISCIO MR. MOOSE SIGNED A PL-480 TITLE I AGREEMENT WORTH DOLS 7 MILLION AND INFORMED PRESIDENT SIAD THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS PREPARED TO INCREASE FOOD AID AND DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. MR. MOOSE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT COULD BOTH ASSIST SOMALIA IN HER DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

4. MR. MOOSE ALSO DISCUSSED WITH PRESIDENT SIAD THE US DESIRE TO ASSIST SOMALIA WITH ITS SECURITY NEEDS. HE TOLD PRESIDENT SIAD THAT IF SOMALIA WISHED TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH ETHIOPIA, KENYA AND DJIBOUTI, HE BELIEVED THAT SOMALIA'S MILITARY NEEDS COULD BE MET BY US AND SOMALIA'S OTHER FRIENDS. HOWEVER, IF THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT MEANT TO PURSUE THE STRUGGLE IN THE OGADEN, IT WOULD GIVE THE ETHIOPIANS A PRETEXT TO RETAIN A SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE AND PERHAPS TO ATTACK THE TERRITORY OF THE SOMALI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.

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FURTHER, THE MORE SOMALIA ATTEMPTED TO PURSUE HER CONFLICT WITH ETHIOPIA IN DJIBOUTI, THE MORE LIKELY WOULD BE SOVIET AND CUBAN INTERVENTION IN THAT REPUBLIC AS WELL. SUCH A COURSE WOULD GREATLY INCREASE SOMALIA'S DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS AND CREATE CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD PREVENT FRIENDLY STATES FROM MEETING SOMALIA'S NEEDS FOR DEFENSE ASSISTANCE.

5. PRESIDENT SIAD WAS INFORMED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER SOUGHT ASSURANCES THAT SOMALIA WOULD REFRAIN FROM THE USE OF FORCE AGAINST HER NEIGHBORS AND WOULD NOT USE US-SUPPLIED DEFENSE EQUIPMENT OR LET OTHERS USE IT FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE THAN THE INTERNAL SECURITY OR LEGITIMATE DEFENSE OF THE INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED TERRITORY OF THE SOMALI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. MUCH TIME WAS SPENT WORKING OUT AN ACCEPTABLE FORM FOR THESE ASSURANCES. SIAD REJECTED ONE FORMULA EMBODYING THE PHRASE "TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY" BECAUSE HE WAS CONCERNED THE PHRASE MIGHT CAST A SHADOW ON THE SOMALI

POSITION IN THE BORDER DISPUTE WITH ETHIOPIA. MR. MOOSE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE ASSURANCES WERE NOT MEANT TO PREJUDICE SOMALIA'S LEGAL CLAIMS CONCERNING THE BOUNDARY DISPUTE WITH ETHIOPIA. PRESIDENT SIAD'S REACTION TO THE US REQUEST FOR RESTRAINT TOWARD KENYA, ETHIOPIA AND DJIBOUTI WAS TO REITERATE THE GSDR POSITION THAT SOMALIA HAD NO CLAIM ON KENYA AND THAT

SOMALIA DID NOT INTEND TO CREATE PROBLEMS FOR DJIBOUTI, BUT THAT THE OGADEN QUESTION WAS A SENSITIVE ONE BOTH FOR THE SOMALI PEOPLE AND FOR THE ARMED FORCES. THERE WAS A STRONG FEELING OF SUPPORT FOR THE WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT. PRESIDENT SIAD SAID HE COULD NOT DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM THE "FREEDOM FIGHTERS", BUT, WHILE HE WOULD NOT DISAVOW SOMALIA'S INTERESTS, HE INSISTED HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO PURSUE AN ACTIVIST POLICY.

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6. MR. MOOSE TOLD SIAD THAT UPON RECEIPT OF THE NECESSARY ASSURANCES CONCERNING SOMALIA'S INTENTIONS WE WOULD TAKE STEPS TO MAKE SOMALIA ELIGIBLE FOR FOREIGN MILITARY SALES PURCHASES FOR WHICH WE WOULD PROVIDE GENEROUS FINANCIAL TERMS, ALTHOUGH NO GRANT AID COULD BE SUPPLIED. WE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS OF NON-US SOURCE ARMS AND WE WOULD REVIEW PROPOSED THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS OF US-SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. TO BEGIN THIS PROCESS THE UNITED STATES WAS PREPARED TO SEND A MILITARY SURVEY TEAM. WE WERE ALSO PREPARED QUICKLY TO PROVIDE A DOLS 10 MILLION NON-LETHAL MILITARY PACKAGE. HOWEVER, MR. MOOSE HAD TOLD PRESIDENT SIAD THAT IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THE UNITED STATES TO SELL SOMALIA TANKS AND AIRCRAFT. SUCH WEAPONS WOULD BE SEEN AS CONTRIBUTING TO SOMALI OFFENSIVE CAPACITY AND, AMONG OTHER CONSEQUENCES, WOULD INCREASE THE DIFFICULTY OF REDUCING THE SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE.

7. MR. MOOSE POINTED OUT THAT THE US OFFER OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA WAS A SIGNIFICANT STEP FOR THE UNITED STATES AND MARKED A DEPARTURE FROM OUR PREVIOUS MOVES VIS-A-VIS SOVIET AND CUBAN INFLUENCES IN AFRICA. SOMALIA WAS A SMALL STATE WITH WHOM THE UNITED STATES HAD HAD POOR RELATIONS OVER THE YEARS. YET AT A MOMENT OF THREAT TO SOMALIA, WE WERE PREPARED TO OFFER MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WE BELIEVED THAT OUR INFLUENCE HAD HELPED KEEP THE CONFLICT FROM SPREADING AND HAD HAD SOME EFFECT IN KEEPING THE SOVIET UNION AND THE

CUBANS FROM CROSSING THE SOMALI BORDER. ALTHOUGH THE
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OFFER OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS A LARGE STEP FOR THE UNITED STATES, IT WAS ONE WHICH MR. MOOSE BELIEVED WOULD RECEIVE CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT. MEANWHILE THE UNITED STATES WAS WORKING CLOSELY WITH KENYA AND HAD SENT A MILITARY SURVEY TEAM

THERE AND TO THE SUDAN. WE BELIEVE THAT IF SOMALIA'S FRIENDS PROVIDED HER WITH ADEQUATE ECONOMIC AID AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT COULD CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS ON ITS DOMESTIC NEEDS.

8. THE MORNING OF MR. MOOSE'S DEPARTURE PRESIDENT SIAD AGREED TO THE ASSURANCES REQUESTED " IN PRINCIPLE". HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT UNLESS THE US SUPPLIED TANKS AND AIRCRAFT A US OFFER TO SUPPLY SOMALIA WITH ARMS " WOULD BE MEANINGLESS". SIAD ALSO INDICATED HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO ALLOW A US SURVEY TEAM TO MAKE A VISIT UNLESS HIS REQUIREMENT FOR TANKS AND AIRCRAFT WOULD BE MET. HE EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION THAT THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT GIVE SOMALIA WEAPONS INSTEAD OF ALLOWING IT TO PURCHASE THEM. MR. MOOSE EXPLAINED TO SIAD THAT A COMMITMENT TO TANKS AND AIRCRAFT WAS UNLIKELY BOTH BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE WEAPONS AND THEIR INCONSISTENCY WITH THE CONCEPT OF DEFENSIVE SUPPORT. PROVISION OF THESE WEAPONS WOULD CREATE SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH CONGRESS. HE ALSO EXPLAINED OUR DECISION NOT TO GIVE GRANT ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA WAS THE RESULT OF A DECISION TO PHASE GRANT ASSISTANCE WORLDWIDE.

9. AS A RESULT OF OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT SIAD, THE UNITED STATES-SOMALIA RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN LEFT IN AN AMBIGUOUS STATE. IT IS CLEAR THAT SIAD WISHES BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THAT WE SHARE SOME COMMON OBJECTIVES. BUT HE APPEARS TO WANT EVIDENCE OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP IN TERMS OF WEAPONS WE ARE UNLIKELY TO PROVIDE, ALTHOUGH HIS REQUEST MAY BE UNRELATED TO HIS ACTUAL NEED AND MAY EXPRESS MORE A
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NEED FOR A SYMBOLIC REASSURANCE. FOR OUR PART WE BELIEVE THAT TO REARM SIAD TO PRE-WAR LEVELS AND TO PROVIDE SOMALIA WITH TANKS AND AIRCRAFT WOULD GIVE THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS AN EXCUSE TO REMAIN IN ETHIOPIA. WE ARE NOT OPPOSED TO HELPING SIAD WITH LEGITIMATE SECURITY NEEDS AND ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO HELP, BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WISE TO PROCEED WITHOUT RESTRAINT AND CAUTION IN VIEW OF THE COMPLEX SITUATION. THIS MAY LEAD SIAD TO CONCLUDE WRONGLY THAT WE ARE NOT SINCERE IN OUR DESIRE TO ASSIST HIM, OR TO BELIEVE, AGAIN WRONGLY, THAT WE WOULD SACRIFICE HIS

LEGITIMATE INTERESTS IN ORDER TO KEEP OUR OPTIONS OPEN WITH THE ETHIOPIANS. THE UNITED STATES WAS READY TO GO FORWARD WITH SOMALIA IN A MILITARY RELATIONSHIP. WE COULD REPROGRAM CREDITS AND WERE READY TO SHARE THE BURDEN OF FINANCING. WE WERE WILLING TO INCREASE OUR FOOD AID FROM ABOUT DOLS 17 MILLION THIS YEAR TO PERHAPS DOLS 27 MILLION. WE HAD BEGUN A DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF DOLS 4 MILLION WHICH WE ARE PREPARED

TO DOUBLE. WE HAVE DECIDED TO INCREASE HUMANITARIAN AID THROUGH THE UNHCR. GIVEN PRESIDENT SIAD'S OVERALL RESPONSE, WE WERE NOT SURE HOW TO GO FORWARD ON MILITARY AID NOR HOW DETERMINED SIAD WAS TO REALIGN HIS POLICY WITH THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES. IT SEEMED AS IF SIAD WOULD RATHER HAVE NOTHING IF HE COULD NOT HAVE TANKS AND AIRCRAFT. MR. MOOSE HOPED SIAD COULD BE PERSUADED, PERHAPS BY THE SAUDIS, TO LOOK AT OUR PROPOSALS AGAIN.

10. IN VIEW OF THE UNCLEAR SITUATION MR. MOOSE EXPRESSED UNITED STATES' DESIRE FOR THE SAUDI VIEW OF THE SITUATION AND AN IDEA OF THE SAUDI'S DISPOSITION IN REGARD TO SOMALIA. WE WISH TO CONSULT WITH THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT ON HOW WE COULD BEST PROCEED TO SUPPORT SIAD AND HOW TO
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PURSUE OUR COMMON OBJECTIVE OF REDUCING THE SOVIET PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE IN THE HORN. WE RECOGNIZE THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THIS QUESTION AND HAD MADE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOMALIA IN RECENT MONTHS. WE WERE PREPARED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND WERE PREPARED TO SHARE THE BURDEN OF FINANCING ITEMS WHICH SOMALIA WOULD NEED. WE HOPED HOWEVER THAT SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER FRIENDLY STATES WOULD WISH TO HELP SOMALIA FINANCE ITS MILITARY PURCHASES.

II. MR. MOOSE ALSO DISCUSSED ERITREA, SAYING THAT SOME US ANALYSTS BELIEVE THAT UNITY AMONG ERITREAN GROUPS WOULD PUT THEM IN A BETTER BARGAINING POSITION. UNITY MIGHT ALSO INCREASE OPPOSITION TO MENGISTU'S POLICY OF SUPPRESSION OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT SINCE THAT POLICY WAS ALREADY UNPOPULAR WITH A CONSIDERABLE SEGMENT IN ETHIOPIA WHICH DESIRED A NON-MILITARY SOLUTION. THE UNITED STATES BELIEVED THAT THE CUBANS WOULD PLAY A MILITARY ROLE IN ERITREA IN THE LONGER RUN DESPITE CUBAN STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY. UNITED STATES SOUGHT A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF SAUDI ARABIA'S VIEWS TOWARD THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ERITREAN SITUATION AND APPROPRIATE POLICY TO TAKE IN REGARD TO THOSE DEVELOPMENTS.

12. MR. MOOSE AGREED THAT CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT ON THE HORN OF AFRICA AND PARTICULARLY ON THE BASIS FOR COMMON EFFORT TO REDUCE SOVIET POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN THE AREA WOULD BE VALUABLE.

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